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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Seventieth year

Identical letters dated 20 March 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, dated 18 March 2015, regarding the thirty-first round of the Geneva international discussions (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 33, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kaha **Imnadze**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 20 March 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the thirty-first round of the Geneva international discussions

Tbilisi, 18 March 2015

The thirty-first round of the Geneva international discussions was held on 18 March 2015. The participants of the discussions took part, in their individual capacity, in two working groups. Security and stability in the Russian-occupied territories of Georgia — Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region — were discussed in working group I, whereas discussions in working group II were focused on issues related to the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their original places of residence. The discussions were co-chaired by the representatives of the European Union, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and attended by participants from Georgia, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. The Head of the Provisional Administration of the former South Ossetian Autonomous District and the Chairman of the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, as well as representatives of the Russian occupation regimes in Sokhumi and Tskhinvali also took part in the discussions.

Negotiations were held in a difficult atmosphere, while in parallel the so-called "treaty on alliance and integration" was being signed in Moscow between Russia and its occupation regime in Tskhinvali. That document implies the factual annexation of the Tskhinvali region by Russia and is directly linked to all key issues on the agenda of the Geneva international discussions, including security and humanitarian aspects.

The decision to have the signature of the so-called "treaty" coincide with the Geneva international discussions represents a deliberate provocation aimed at discrediting the only format of negotiations between Georgia and Russia on security issues under international mediation and disrupting the current round of the discussions.

The Georgian delegation raised the issue with the co-chairs and the representatives of the United States and called upon them to give a proper assessment of the illegal and provocative action of the Russian Federation. On the eve of the signature, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the United States Department of State made statements condemning the so-called "treaty" between the Russian Federation and its occupation regime in Tskhinvali. That the day of the signature coincided with the Geneva international discussions was assessed as an action directed against the existing format. The issue was also touched upon in the statement of the co-chairs of the discussions, in which they called upon the participants to engage constructively.

Within the working groups, participants from Georgia condemned Russia's factual annexation of the occupied territories and its deliberate policy against the Geneva international discussions. They highlighted all the risks stemming from the

implementation of the so-called "treaties" for the Russian-occupied Georgian regions and the adjacent areas in the security, humanitarian and human rights spheres.

In the light of the current situation, the Georgian delegation stressed the urgent necessity of a non-use of force pledge by Russia, as well as the establishment of effective international security and human rights monitoring mechanisms inside the occupied territories. Within working group II, the importance of the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees, freedom of movement across the occupation line and receiving education in one's native language were discussed.

The fundamental demands of the Georgian side were rejected by some participants and, as a result, they walked out at the end of the round. The Georgian delegation made the best of the format of the thirty-first round of the Geneva international discussions and raised all key issues pertaining to the agenda.

The next round of the Geneva international discussions will be held on 30 June and 1 July 2015.